



Kenya Civil Society Strengthening Program – Natural Resources Management

What is the Kenya Civil Society Strengthening Program?

The USAID-funded Kenya Civil Society Strengthening Program (KCSSP) provides grants to build the capacity of Civil Society Organizations and Community Based Organizations in the Natural Resources Management (NRM) sector to advocate for policy reforms, monitor government activities, and build coalitions to work toward shared goals. KCSSP supports 14 grantees working in National Resources Management in areas including advocacy, forest management, and nature based enterprises.



Muileshi Community Forest Association members planting trees in Iloro degraded sites in Kakamega Forest

Project Duration and Budget

September 2006 – March 2013
\$33 million

Who implements the Kenya Civil Society Strengthening Program?

ACT!

www.act.or.ke

Where does the Kenya Civil Society Strengthening Program work?

Mount Kenya Landscape, Kakamega Landscape, Nakuru/Navaisha Landscape, Amboseli Landscape

What does the Kenya Civil Society Strengthening Program do?

Grantee's promote sustainable and responsible fishing; advocate for wildlife legislation, climate change legislation, effective land policy, and progressive tourism; and support income-generating nature-based enterprises. KCSSP grantee projects include:

Mount Kenya Landscape

- Training farmers to propagate bamboo crops.
- Supporting stakeholders to develop and manage nature-based enterprises.
- Expanding production capacity of honey collection centers and promoting marketing of honey.

Kakamega Landscape

- Developing Forest Management Plan to preserve the Kakamega Forest, Kenya's only remaining tropical rainforest.
- Promoting commercial cultivation of White's ginger, an important medicinal plant, currently extinct in the wild.

Nakuru/Naivasha Landscape

- Promoting community-based ecotourism initiatives.
- Organizing community forums on protecting water catchment sites and indigenous trees in the Kikuyu Escarpment.

Amboseli Landscape

- Implementing water resource management governance structures.
- Enhancing income generation for local ranchers through nature-based enterprises.

How is the Kenya Civil Society Strengthening Program making a difference?

CSO and CBO skills and capacity building by KCSSP have yielded important outcomes, including:

- Ksh 22.8M in revenue contributed to local economy from 2010 – 2011.
- 50,100 seedlings planted in Kabaru Forest.
- Lake Nakuru Poultry Self-Help Group produces and sells energy-saving cook stoves, fireless cookers, solar cook kits with a grant from KCSSP yielding monthly income of 10,000 – 15,000 Kshs
- Beekeeping farmers formed a marketing cooperative in Burguret.

What key challenges does the Kenya Civil Society Strengthening Program face?

Civil society organizations can sometimes compete rather than coalesce, which weakens advocacy efforts and inhibits knowledge and skills sharing. Weak organizational capacity and ad hoc management procedures can lead to high staff attrition, poor financial management, and staff conflict. Poor access to electricity has an adverse impact on tourist camps. Prolonged drought and erratic rains result in high mortality rate of tree seedlings.

The Kenya Civil Society Strengthening Program in action

Peace and prosperity go hand in hand in the Kikuyu Forest Reserve. The Kikuyu and Ilparakwo Maasai communities in the Kikuyu Forest have not always been friendly. After conflict flared up over shared water resources in 2000, KENVO (Kijabe Environmental Volunteers), a youth group that had been protecting the Kikuyu Escarpment Forests, decided to take things in hand. They approached the Maasai community living at the foot of the escarpment and proposed a joint water project to resolve the conflict. The Maasai agreed.

The water project was such a success that the Kikuyu and the Maasai pushed forward to tackle an issue of huge concern to both communities: livelihoods. Located between two major tourism areas, the new allies decided to start a joint tourism business. With land donated by the Maasai and mobilization skills provided by KENVO, they forged ahead. Opportunistically, a KCSSP call for proposals coincided with the joint venture idea, and KENVO submitted a proposal.

One success led to another and KENVO was granted the start-up capital required for the venture as well as access to KCSSP enterprise development training and mentorship. Together, KENVO and the Ilparakwo erected the Osutwa Tourist Camp with 12 beds, a lounge, and a 50-seat restaurant. (Osutwa means “peace” in Maa language.) KCSSP connected KENVO with hotel industry practitioners who mentored the new business owners in food and beverage, housekeeping, and administrative services.

Osutwa guests experience a fusion of Kikuyu and Maasai cultures, including traditional dances. Forest trails attract bicyclists, hikers, and bird and wildlife enthusiasts. In its first three months, Osutwa generated Ksh 153,000 in revenue. The lodge’s first guests were so impressed with the services at Osutwa that they paid double! But the benefit to the Kikuyu and Maasai communities goes far beyond monetary gain. Theirs is the story of two ethnic groups that rose above conflict to make peace and built that peace on common ground that unites them: the need for livelihoods.

For more information:

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Photo: USAID/KCSSP



Maasai dancers perform for guests at the Osutwa Tourist Camp

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